1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

The fact that the words for dream and reflection, double or shadow are from the same root in the Northern languages is of interest. Dreams are sometimes explained by saying that the sleeper's double (*ot-jumulo*) has left his body and is wandering elsewhere. Dreams are regarded as being veridical, or at any rate, as having importance. One man told me how, in a dream the night before, his *ot-jumulo* had travelled from where we were to his own country and had there seen the death of the baby of a woman of his own tribe. He was fully convinced that the baby must really have died.

An Andamanese will never, or only with the very greatest reluctance, awaken another from sleep. One explanation of this that was given to me was that the *ot-jumulo* or double of the sleeper may be wandering far from his body, and to waken him suddenly might cause him to be ill.

The principle on which dreams are interpreted is a very simple one. All unpleasant dreams are bad, all pleasant ones are good. The natives believe that sickness is often caused by dreams. A man in the early stages of an attack of fever, for instance, may have a bad dream. When the fever develops he explains it as due to the dream. If a man has a painful dream he will often not venture out of the camp the following day, but will stay at home until the effect has worn off. The natives believe that they can communicate in dreams with the spirits, but the power to do this regularly is the privilege of certain special individuals, known as *oko-jumu* (dreamers). However, an ordinary individual may occasionally have dreams of this kind.

I found that any attempt to study the dreams of such a people as the Andamanese is made very difficult by the fact that it is never possible to tell how far the original dream has been arranged and altered by the waking imagination. So far as my observations went the majority of dreams are either visual or motor, or both. Further reference to dreams will be made later in connection with magic.

When a man or woman dies the double (or as some of the natives explain it, the breath) leaves the body and becomes a spirit (*lau* or *ćauga*). By death a man ceases to exist as a man, and begins a new existence as a spirit.

1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
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intercourse with the spirits in his dreams. This is a point to which it will be necessary to return later. For the present it is sufficient to note that in every instance the power of the medicine-man is believed to be derived from his contact with the spirits in one of the three possible ways.

We are justified in concluding that the special power of the medicine-man, by which he is distinguished from his fellows, is simply the same power that is possessed by the spirits, from contact with whom he has obtained it. The medicine-man is believed to be able both to cause and to cure sickness, to arouse and to dispel storms. In other words he has power for both good and evil, and we must conclude that the spirits have the same. Moreover, it is commonly said that the medicine-man is able to produce the effects he does, whether they be harmful or beneficial to his fellows, by communicating with the spirits in dreams and enlisting their aid. This would seem to prove the point that I am here concerned with, that the power possessed by the spirits, though contact with it is always dangerous, may yet in certain circumstances be of benefit to the society, and is therefore not essentially evil in nature.

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The Andamanese believe that a medicine-man communicates with the spirits in sleep, and this is not the only evidence that they believe sleep to be a condition in which contact with the world of spirits is easier than in waking life. It is believed that sickness is more likely to begin during sleep than when awake. During the initiation ceremonies the initiate is required to abstain from sleep after eating pork or turtle, and this would seem to be because sleep is regarded as generally dangerous and therefore to be avoided on such occasions as this when every precaution needs to be taken.

The explanation of this belief seems to lie in the fact that sleep is a condition of diminished social activity, in which the individual is withdrawn from active social life, and is therefore also withdrawn from the protection of the society. After eating turtle the initiate is in urgent need of the protection of the society, which would be lost to him if he were permitted to sleep. After a death, when the corpse remains in the camp all night the people remain awake, and since there is no other common activity in

1: Radcliffe-Brown E-5 (1906-1908)1922
AZ2 Andamans AZ2

which they can join, they sing, and thus protect themselves from the spirits that are present as the cause of the death.

This explanation implies that all conditions of diminished social activity on the part of an individual are dangerous. One example of such a condition is sickness, in which the sick person is unable to pursue his ordinary occupations. Other examples are afforded by a mother, and to a certain extent a father during the period preceding and following the birth of a child, and by a woman during the menstrual period. All these, as various customs show, are believed by the Andamanese to be conditions of danger in which it is necessary to take ritual or magical precautions. A better example for our purpose is that of an adolescent during the period covered by the initiation ceremonies, when, as we have seen, he is as it were cut off from the society, and there is abundant evidence that the Andamanese believe this to be a state of danger. Another example is the condition of a homicide during the period of his isolation. Lastly, we have seen that a mourner is cut off from the ordinary social life, and it may now be noted that the native explanation of the restrictions observed in that state is that if things were not done thus the mourner would be ill; in other words the condition of mourning is one of danger, and the ritual referring to it is the means by which the danger (from the spirit world) is avoided. This explanation does not conflict with the one previously given but on the contrary we can now see that the notion that the mourner is in a position partly withdrawn from active participation in social life necessarily involves the belief that he is in a condition of danger.

We may conclude that every condition in which the individual is withdrawn from full participation in active social life is regarded as dangerous for him, and that this is at least one of the reasons why sleep is so regarded. We have already noted that all conditions of danger tend to be thought of as due to contact with the spirits, and sleep is therefore supposed to be a state in which such contact is easier than in waking life. Now sleep is visited by dreams and it comes about that the dream-life, by reason of its contrast with waking-life, is seized upon by the Andamanese as a means by which the nature of the spirit world may be represented to the imagination.

2:Man G-5 (1869-1880)1932 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

cannot apparently abstain from food without inconvenience for more than eight hours at a time.

3. When exerting themselves in any way they perspire freely, which may account for their inordinate thirst. So great, indeed, is their inability to endure any privation in respect to drink, that they seldom leave home on the shortest expedition, whether by land or sea, without providing themselves with one or more bamboo vessels, called *gōb-*, containing a supply of fresh water.

4. Loss of sleep they can bear well only when under the influence of strong excitement, as in turtle hunting, or at festive gatherings, where singing and dancing are kept up for many successive hours;[1] they have even been known to spend forty-eight hours at such times without taking any rest.

5. What little cool weather there is in the latitude of their islands, during December and January, they dislike extremely; in striking evidence of this they are found, as I will elsewhere mention,[2] unconsciously concurring with the great Italian poet in depicting the region of punishment, for the souls of the wicked, as one of intense cold. After this, it will appear somewhat strange to say that, in spite of their aversion to what they consider cold weather—which never registers less than 69° F. on the highest elevation in South Andaman—they are careful, during the hot season, to avoid any lengthened exposure to the direct rays of the sun, and endeavour to lessen the discomfort caused by the heat by smearing their persons with a white-wash of common white clay and water.[3] It has long been erroneously believed that they have recourse to this expedient in order to allay the inconvenience which they would otherwise suffer from the bites of mosquitoes and other jungle pests; but the true reason for the practice is, I am well assured, that which I have above given, for the various insects which might annoy them are, for the most part, kept away by the smoke of the hut fire, beside which a great portion of their time is spent when at rest, or when engaged in any sedentary occupation.

6. The voices of the men are usually clear without being deep, while those of the women, especially when raised, are very shrill.

7. The mucous membrane of the mouth is stained with pigment to a greater degree than was found to be the case with such of the natives of India as were compared with them.

8. The general excellence of the teeth strikes one as remark-

[1] *Vide post* "Games and Amusements," paragraph 32.

[2] *Vide post* "Religious Beliefs, &c.," paragraph 25.

[3] I would here draw attention to the fact, that while the object in smearing themselves with *ôg-* wash is to keep themselves as cool as possible, they often daub their bodies with *kòi'ob-* after sundown for the opposite reason, *i.e.*, for the sake of warmth.

2:Man G-5 (1869-1880)1932 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

toes of each foot; if a tree is branched they will scramble up it almost as quickly as if scaling a ladder, and though when "swarming" a mast or cocoa-nut tree they clasp the trunk in the usual manner with the arms and legs, their movements are more rapid, and they are less easily fatigued, than are the generality of natives of India; in descending also they display the same activity.

3. I have observed a peculiar trick among young men and women, after a lengthened rest or after engaging in some sedentary occupation, of twisting their bodies from side to side in order to stretch the muscles of the back. In doing this they produce a succession of sounds like that caused by cracking the joints of one's fingers.

4. Their favourite position in taking temporary rest after any violent or prolonged exertion is the ordinary Oriental posture between sitting and standing, *i.e.*, squatting on their heels; if very much exhausted they either sit or lie down.

5. The usual attitude in sleep (*vide* Plate III, fig. 2) is to lie on one side, preferably the right, with the knees bent so as to allow of the hand of the upper arm being placed between the thighs and the other hand under the head, which is raised on some impromptu pillow, such as a bundle or a roll of sleeping mat.

6. Many are able to shut one eye without closing the other, but they do not appear to possess the power of moving the ears or scalp. They can extend one finger without opening the hand. No tricks of sleight of hand are known to or attempted by them.

7. Much use is made of the feet in holding and picking up light objects, and the great toe is in a considerable degree opposable. When a heavy load has to be moved they prefer pushing to dragging it.[1]

Physical Powers and Senses.—1. Though for a short distance heavier loads are often borne, the maximum of a man's burden is about 40 lbs.; this he will on occasion carry for as much as 15 miles through the jungles between sunrise and sunset, a distance rarely exceeded in one day under any circumstances, or for more than two or three days in succession. This has been particularly remarked when they have been in pursuit of runaway convicts, for, if they fail in coming up with them within the third day, they are wont to take a long rest, unless strong inducements are offered by way of inciting them to further efforts.

[1] They do not understand, or, at least, do not carry into practice, the principle of pushing or dragging a weight *simultaneously*, whether in silence or to the sound of the voice.

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I have often come across one of their temporary habitations, which consists of a hole scooped out in the sand, beneath an over-hanging rock, large enough to contain a single person." As these savages are *never* in the habit of sleeping on the sand, or in holes scooped in the ground, but on a mat, or leaves spread under one or other of the three varieties of huts described above, it is difficult to account for what Dr. Dobson saw, unless they were the resting places of ticket-of leave fishermen or convict runaways. No other explanation than this could be given when some aborigines, and an experienced attendant at the homes, were questioned by me on the subject. One other solution only is possible, and that is, that the "holes scooped out in the sand" were the result of a game of mock burial, which, as I shall mention under "Games and Amusements," is rather a favourite recreation of the *àryô·to-* children.

7. The majority of the Great Andaman huts[1] partake of the character of a lean-to, the only respects in which the three varieties differ being[2] size and durability. They are found either standing alone, or, as is more especially the case in permanent encampments, so joined together as to form (at least, in their owners' eyes) a commodious as well as a weather-proof dwelling; and, constructed, as they usually are, in well-sheltered localities, away from the prevailing wind, they fulfil all the requirements of a savage home.

8. Permanent encampments vary in size, and consist of several huts, which in all are rarely inhabited by more than from 50 to 80 persons, though they are capable of affording accommodation, of a kind, to a much larger number if necessity arise as happens not unfrequently when festive tribal gatherings are arranged in honor of a wedding or other occasion of rejoicing.

9. The permanent encampments of the *àryô·to-* are established in those sites which offer special advantages for fishing and turtling at all seasons. Wherever there is a fine stretch of sandy beach, with an extensive foreshore, they will be invariably found, for, at such places, throughout the year the women are able at low tide to catch fish in pools with their hand-nets, and to collect large quantities of shell-fish; while, during the flood

[1] One of the huts in the *jăr·awa-* territory, between Port Blair and Port Campbell, when visited a few years ago, was found to measure 46 feet × 42 feet; and Mr. Homfray, in 1867, described the huts at Little Andaman as capable (*more Andamanico*) of accommodating 100 persons, being 50 feet in diameter and 30 feet in height. The leaf employed by this tribe for thatching purposes appears to be invariably the variety called *ôm-*, and not the *chà·ngta-*.

[2] The largest hut of the ordinary type is rarely found capable of accommodating more than six persons. Sometimes these huts are placed together so as to resemble small sheds, but as this has hitherto been seen only in or near South Andaman, it is possible that the form of our barracks gave rise to the idea.

2:Man G-5 (1869-1880)1932 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

PLATE VI.

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GREAT ANDAMAN TYPES AT PORT BLAIR HOME.

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CHANG-TONGA (SECOND-CLASS LEAN-TO) IN SOUTH ANDAMAN: FRIENDS WEEPING TOGETHER AFTER LONG SEPARATION; ATTITUDE IN SLEEP, ETC.

[facing p. 78]

2:Man G-5 (1869-1880)1932 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

PLATE VIII.

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ANDAMANESE EQUIPPED FOR JOURNEY.

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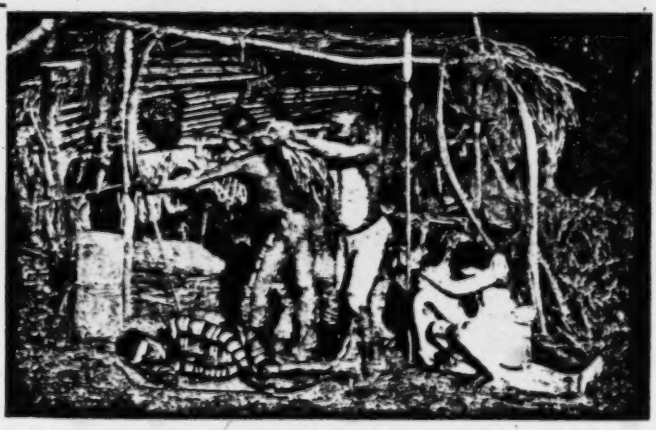

ANDAMANESE SHOOTING, DANCING, SLEEPING, AND GREETING.

[facing p. 110]

6: Cipriani E-5 (1951-1953)1961 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Onge

515 people. Furthermore, the Onge skin is very soft and more elastic than is usual
[147] in human beings. For us, clothed and with a less resilient skin, a trip through the thorny Andaman forest means many small, bleeding scratches. Not so for the naked Onge. – To cover them with clothes would endanger their health. Nakedness inures them to the sudden changes of temperature so frequent in
[513] Little Andaman and preserves them from catching cold when sleeping, uncovered, on their rough, unprotected bed of boughs. As with primitives all over the world, clothes make them miserable and, I may add, very ungainly and dirty.

515 Part of their general negligence with regard to hygiene is their carelessness about their teeth. They never clean them. They do keep bamboo sticks,
[413] 1 mm thick and 8 cms long, tucked into their hair to be ostensibly used as toothpicks ; but the sticks, to tell the truth, are more of an ornament than a tool.
142 The Onge's teeth are so compact and sound that there is no space between
[164] them for food particles to collect. No caries or decay of any sort are to be noticed. In a number of skeletons that I dug up from under the beds in communal huts, the teeth gave evidence of one peculiarity : old people had worn
[283] them down to the root. The Onge habit of using teeth as working instruments, to prepare fibre for ropes and in many other circumstances – apart from their permanent chewing on hard foodstuffs – explains this fact.

515 As a consequence of never washing, the natives' hands are sometimes extremely dirty. The Onge themselves are conscious of this. I shall give an
226 instance. It so happened that I arrived in Nachugé, on the west coast, toward the end of March, when the sea was teeming with migrating sardines. In Little Andaman sardines can weigh up to a pound ; but a normal catch, obtained with small hand-nets cast from canoes among shoals of fish imprisoned by the low tide within the coral reef that surrounds the island, contains specimens of
[264] every dimension. All are eaten as soon as possible. The quantity of fish brought back to the camps on such occasions puts all inmates to work and induces everybody to abandon all other occupations for the time being. In the low tidal waters the men push their canoes from rock to rock, using them as receptacles for the abundant food so easily collected. In some "pockets" nets prove unnecessary : the fish is gathered in handfuls and rapidly thrown into the canoes. The hecatomb ends when the canoes are filled to the gunwales. In no other part of the world have I seen food made available to primitive people in such large quantities and with so little effort.

252 Back at the camp, the sardines are "graded" according to size and cooked immediately. They are not washed or cleaned, the inner organs are eaten to-
[263] gether with the flesh. Men, women and children feverishly take part in the
264 cooking ; the fish is boiled without salt. All the natives then plunge their hands
515 avidly into the heap of sardines. From time to time the women clean their hands by rubbing them on the *naquinèghé*. Very soon this garment becomes
[231] extremely smelly. Men and children clean their hands in a different way : by rubbing them on the dogs. On such occasions, everything and everybody smells of fish for days and days. The first to become clean again are the dogs, because they hate to be smeared with fish and wash themselves in the sea as soon as they have a chance.

6: Cipriani E-5 (1951-1953)1961 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Onge

and therefore dangerous to offend by cooking them. Luckily they accepted fish of almost every description, and vegetables. To convince them of our good intentions concerning their food, at Port Blair an Onge observer was stationed permanently near the kitchen to watch the preparation of meals. Nevertheless, within a few days all 30 Onge fell ill as a consequence of the different food and climate. In their island they sleep, completely naked and uncovered, lying directly on beds made of rough branches. Their only precaution, as I mentioned before, is to keep a fire permanently burning close to the bed. This was not feasible in the rooms with wooden floors that were provided for them in Port Blair, and blankets did not avail. So the 30 Onge developed a fever and we were obliged to take them urgently back to Little Andaman, where they promptly recovered. The incident gave me a further opportunity to observe the curative methods of the Onge.

With regard to their care to avoid illness from food, I must point out the fact that misleading information has been published on the subject even in reputed papers on the Andamans. I will discuss them in my Onge book, but I wish here to briefly stress a few points: the Onge, and the present residual coastal or forest Andamanese, refuse to eat – besides birds and fish such as shark, ray, eel or muraenae – some other animals such as paradoxurus, bats, rats, varanus and snakes. The contrary is affirmed in those papers. To quote the well-known book by A. R. RADCLIFFE-BROWN ("The Andaman Islanders", pp. 37, 91 and 389), all Andaman Islanders, including the Onge, consider the above-mentioned species edible. Varanus is supposed to be acceptable for its lustful habits that make of it an aphrodisiac. My direct and protracted experience both in Little and in Great Andaman compels me to state that such information is false. It is true, however, that the Andaman Islanders believe they acquire some of the properties of their devoured victims. This occurs only if the animals are cut up alive. Therefore turtles, pigs and dugongs are cruelly sectioned while still alive, and the Onge also believe that their health and energy profit by it. Cannibalism may be founded on such beliefs, but it is completely unknown to Andaman Islanders of all times and places. Young sucking-pigs are avoided, as food, by men, and even withheld from the dogs; but the Onge are partial to other things which, in our opinion, are far worse: crickets, and the fat larvae of coleoptera that collect in tree trunks.

Without giving here a full list of the foods that are considered harmful or curative, I shall add just a few remarks on the subject. The healthiest, as well as the tastiest part of the pig is supposed to be the kidney and its surrounding fat. It is offered to old or distinguished people, as a sign of favour. As I helped the Onge, as much as possible, with gifts of tools and medicines, they found it complimentary to name me after their favorite titbit, intending thereby to honour me as a friend and healer. By such a name I came to be known in Little Andaman, and this made my work easier. In the Onge language the word for kidney fat is *cue-changhēghē*; I was delighted with it, for it proclaimed the high esteem I was held in by my Onge friends.

Foods considered healthy by the Onge include honey, yams, several succulent roots and the fat of turtle and dugong. Pteropus, a giant bat very

6: Cipriani E-5 (1951-1953)1961 AZ2 Andamans AZ2
Onge

Endogamous life, or the habit of never washing even the female genital organs, cannot be the only cause of Andamanese sterility. Alcohol and venereal diseases such as syphilis may only be a complementary cause. The Onge's limited fertility probably derives from other factors besides their protracted and inceasingly strict endogamy.

We can only remark that Onge women rarely become pregnant before 28 ; their fertility ceases around the age of 48. The high rate of sterility among Onge women after marriage (which generally takes place at the age of 14) is puzzling indeed. Of several childless couples that I studied in Little Andaman, the woman was under 28. There is hope of fertility after that age. It could so happen, for instance, in the case of two young Onge chiefs, Okkeggi and Chendubai, married to two sisters among the most beautiful and flourishing girls on the island : Ooaghēghē and Tocooaghēghē, both around 20. They never became pregnant, although menstruation was normal and they had plenty of sexual intercourse, even extra-marital.

The delayed appearance of fertility in Andamanese women is probably connected with a general biological condition fostered by unhygienic habits. For instance : young Onge females have a high vagina acidity content that is certainly harmful to spermatozoa. It decreases with age, facilitating, we may suppose, fecundation. Vaginal washing would help, but the Onge women never recur to it. But this is only one side of the question. It is evidently urgent to do whatever is necessary to save the Onge from extinction. We must remember that civilized nations, through international agreements, are anxious to protect plant and animal species from disappearance. The same should be done for man, and equivalent international laws are needed. The Onge as a human group are on the verge of extinction ; but they still retain enough vitality to be rescued before they finally vanish into eternity.

Without enlarging here on the disorders of Onge sexual life and their dire effects also on the number of births, I wish to point out one more fact : Onge homosexuality as a normal occurrence. It is a plague in Little Andaman, helped by the regular physiological functions of both extremities of the digestive tube. The sexual tendencies that prevail in Little Andaman are a strong criticism of FREUD's theories on sexual life, but I will not discuss this here. I would rather say a few words about some opinions regarding the cause of Onge sterility that I heard expressed in the Andamans. Foreigners there ascribe it to the *naquinēghē* – the grass-like apron worn by women. Colonists believe that this garment leads to copulation from the rear, reducing the chances of fecundation. This idea is incorrect : the Onge never do this because the *naquinēghē* can be easily lifted as required, and pulled up over the abdomen. It is true that Onge women remove the *naquinēghē* only to replace it with a fresh one ; they wear it even when sleeping. Not for a single instant must women remain "undressed", for superstitious reasons. When a new *naquinēghē* is needed, the old one is furtively disposed of. Husband and wife repair secretely to a remote part of the forest, the woman slipping the new garment over her head before removing the old one, and burying the latter, which is quickly destroyed by white ants. The Onge believe that possession by a stranger of a worn

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

Near my camp at Labanar, in March 1952, I witnessed a distressing and fatal case. A young woman, with a baby a month old, had suckled another child, as the Onge women do. The older infant, which had cut its teeth, caused damage to the nipples and the ensuing infection spread throughout the body. The wretched woman was writhing with fever and the pain from her infected breasts and suppressed lactation. Her body had been smeared with a vermilion ochre, held to be the most powerful balm, and tightly bound, as usual. Her condition was so poor that I suggested sending her at once to Port Blair for treatment. Unfortunately, however, at that time I was only just beginning to establish contact with the Onges, and the woman's husband, after all the arrangements had been made, refused to let her go. I had not yet gained the Onges' confidence enough to be allowed near the woman, and although I was able to photograph her I could do nothing to prevent her death.

The decision to administer 'medicine' and subject patients to various treatments is not the province of any specialists, but is taken by anyone in the group; all, including the patient, accept the decision, since all are utterly convinced that it will benefit them. Medicine men and sorcerers, so numerous in Africa and elsewhere, do not exist among the Andamanese.

The Onges have not the slightest idea of any standards of hygiene. They never wash intentionally; the forest, dripping from every leaf, and frequent immersion in water while out hunting, take care of the problem. One must admit that in the circumstances their nakedness is hygienic. A small fire is kept burning beside each bed at night for warmth, a useful precaution which I found very welcome on the many cold nights which followed a very hot day. Deprived of these fires the Onges fall ill at once, a fact of which I had ample proof on several occasions when I took Onges with me out of Little Andaman; they were provided with beds and coverings in well-constructed wooden houses, but although none of them complained about the absence of the fires by their beds they all developed feverish chills.

And yet in their own territory I have seen them lie soaking wet all night in one of their temporary forest camps or a communal hut with a leaking roof without any ill effects, simply because they had

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

their fires beside them. On the night of 4–5 April 1953, while I was sleeping with them in the communal hut at Berié-Abdalù a sudden storm drenched us all, forcing us to huddle together round fires under the more waterproof parts of the roof. Numb with cold, but cheerful, they began joking, singing[1] and dancing, men and women separately; this went on all night, and no one suffered any ill effects from the soaking.

The Onge lack of hygiene extends also to their cooking utensils, which are never washed. In recent years the ocean has provided the Onges with a generous and unexpected gift; currents running from the south of Asia have thrown up on to the shores of Little Andaman a shoal of empty petrol drums, stout metal cylinders 1·3 metres high and eighty centimetres in diameter. The astute Onges have patiently divided each one in two, each section big enough to take a large pig. Set on big fires these serve as wonderful cooking pots, and the Onges are delighted with them. Unfortunately, however, although they were thrown up all round the island, the supply is beginning to dry up, and they are rapidly being eaten away by rust.

To boil food, the Onges set the drums on two large logs, laid parallel, with a fire between them. Stones are rarely used to support the drums, although there are plenty about in the interior of the island. On the coast, and for a fair way inland, there is nothing but coral, hard but liable when it gets hot to disintegrate under the heavy weight of the cylinders filled to the brim.

In these gifts from the sea the Onges could prepare tasty broths, but they invariably allow nearly all the water to boil away, and the cooking process is not considered complete until all the liquid has gone. While it is boiling, however, they take care not to lose the fat floating on the top, which they adore. They have even invented a curious sort of dipping-stick for the purpose of skimming the fat off. They take a shoot about twenty centimetres long from a plant which disintegrates into fibre when chewed. One end is chewed into a loose 'brush' and no one present misses his turn to dip it into the pot again and again to skim off a mouthful of fat, even getting up in the night in their eagerness for it. One stick naturally does for everyone, men, women and children, the

[1] The Onge voice is not markedly different from the European. It has a musical quality, fairly high-pitched but never shrill; the Onges never raise their voices, even in anger – disagreements invariably end in a dignified silence.

11: Cipriani E-3 (1951-1955) 1966 AZ2 Andamans AZ2

ground. Two parallel transverse poles of equal length, one front and one back, complete the frame, which is lashed together with the usual rush fibres. The roof consists of fresh *Pandanus* leaves, palms, or grass. It never actually touches the ground, and food refuse is thrown out from underneath it in the usual way, covering the ground round the shelter.

The bed takes a little longer than the roof to put up, as a number of sticks have to be gathered to make the compact platform, raised about half a metre from the ground on four stout props driven into the ground, one at each corner, and a suitable trunk has to be found for the head-rest. Normally one bed takes an entire family – mother, father, children and dogs, all well packed on the platform with the inevitable fire beside. On rare occasions, when the shelter is intended purely for the menfolk on a hunting expedition, only one bed is prepared, but generally every hunter has his family with him. I have myself slept like this with the Onges on trips where the forest was too dense for any baggage to be carried.

As the kitchen-middens show (see p. 68), their permanent huts are, with very few exceptions, circular and are still extremely simple. The essential feature is the waterproof roof-mats, well overlapped, which form the enormous umbrella roof. From the outside the whole thing looks in danger of collapsing, but from the interior it is obviously safely held by a frame of poles, lashed with innumerable ties to stout uprights fixed firmly into the ground. No central pillar is needed, and when there is one it is only by chance; I saw very few on Little Andaman. There are no divisions into rooms or compartments – everything is open to the eyes of all the occupants of the beds. Most of these are arranged as the radii of a circle, fairly near the outer edge of the hut, the roof coming down so close to the ground that everyone sleeps with their heads towards the centre, but there may be some beds across the centre space.

At the circumference the roof is only thirty to forty centimetres from the ground, the roofing mats being well lashed on to uprights in case of high winds, and one can wriggle in and out of the hut on one's stomach, crawling over the refuse thrown out through the convenient gap. There is always, however, a 'proper' entrance, where one edge of the roof-wall can be lifted up. At the top of the roof, on the lee side, one section can be propped open on poles,

352 The beds are supported on four convenient branches forked at the top, on which the four poles forming the bed frame rest. The size of the frame varies between 1·55 × 0·65 metres and 1·15 × 0·43 metres, and on this small platform the entire family sleeps huddled
● 513 together. The human members of the family lie longwise, all with their heads on the same log set as a head-rest (unless they are lucky enough to find a suitable giant bamboo washed up on the beach). Very occasionally a rush mat about half a metre square is laid on the platform, but usually the family just lies on bare canes packed tightly together on the frame parallel with the long side.

342 The hut at Tambe-e-buiè, its 1951 edition delayed till 1952 by
352 the earthquake the previous year when part of the coast dropped,
184 was rather larger than Toqué-è-bùie. In 1953 it was rebuilt twenty
[731] metres or so further back from the sea, but exactly as before. It has twelve beds, including two on the high platforms for the adolescents, one of which has two tiers, on the principle of our bunks. I saw this type of thing on a number of occasions and on one occasion I saw one being built out in the open, with the top platform three metres from the ground. All the beds at Tambe-e-buiè are rather higher than at Toqué-è-bùie (but not as high as Beniabol) and were all arranged radially; the platform on which meat was kept was two metres off the ground.

342 An unusual feature of Tambe-e-buiè, which had a diameter of
184 13·55 metres and a maximum height of 4·5 metres, was a series of six vertical poles set in a straight line to support the main transverse beam, one of which could be regarded as a centre pole. The pole on each side of the centre formed part of the innermost circle of supporting poles; there were two more circles, all supporting rings of canes. Unusually, only one of the rings of canes supporting the roof did not rest on vertical poles. The outer ring was only 0·4 metres high and the edge of the roof almost touched the ground, although one could still brush the fronds apart and crawl out. The roof mats were rectangular, very well made, and larger than at Toqué-è-bùie; some were three and a half metres by three metres or more, laid over seven or ten split reeds, instead of the usual four or five.

312 No permanent hut, or even a temporary shelter, is ever built far
[361] from water supplies adequate for the number of people in the group. If there is none visible, the Onges know how to dig for it,